

BONUS — Concept Twelve — OPTIONAL meditation and writings for conference registrants:

Please read Concept Twelve in our “12, 12, and 12” book, then spend several minutes meditating on each of the questions below. We suggest answering every question we’ve posed; first in writing, then reading your answers aloud, sharing with a fellow BDAer or two. No long essays are necessary, just a paragraph or two in direct answer to a question. These questions are posed by the author and editors of the workshop materials based on our own experience, strength, and hope and a deep read of Concept Twelve. Most if not all of the questions below can be applied to our personal and business lives, as well as to our interactions with our fellow DAers.

Concept Twelve: “The Conference of Debtors Anonymous will observe the spirit of the Traditions, taking care not to become powerful and wealthy; having sufficient operating funds with a prudent reserve; having no authority over any other members; making important decisions by discussing and voting on issues wherever possible by substantial unanimity; not acting in a punitive way; not inciting public controversy; never performing any acts of government; and finally, always remaining democratic in thought and action.”

- 1) Have I committed to observe the spirit of the Traditions and Concepts? Can I apply that spirit at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 2) Have I committed to observe the spirit of the Steps? Can I apply that spirit at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 3) Do I understand Warranty One of DA’s Concept Twelve: “taking care not to become powerful and wealthy”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 4) Do I understand Warranty Two: “having sufficient operating funds with a prudent reserve”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 5) Do I understand Warranty Three: “having no authority over any other members”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 6) Do I understand Warranty Four: “making important decisions by discussing and voting on issues wherever possible by substantial unanimity”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 7) Do I understand Warranty Five: “not acting in a punitive way”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 8) Do I understand Warranty Six: “not inciting public controversy”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 9) Do I understand Warranty Seven: “never performing any acts of government”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?
- 10) Do I understand Warranty Eight: “always remaining democratic in thought and action”? Can I apply this Warranty at home, at work, in DA and BDA?

BONUS — Concept Twelve — OPTIONAL meditation and writings for conference registrants — continued:

Guidance on the practice of Concept Twelve, along with its eight Warranties, can be found near the end of the Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service (DAMS), downloadable via <https://www.helpfordebtors.org/da-and-bda-service-literature>. As for practicing this Concept at home and in our businesses, we understand the Warranties to mean the following:

Warranty One / Power and Wealth: It seems odd to think of avoiding wealth, especially in our personal and business lives and we don't think that's what's being suggested to each of us as individual DA and BDA members. We think the suggestion for us, personally, is to avoid using our wealth as power, which might lend itself to wealth as weaponry. Power in the hands of addicts, including compulsive debtors, has caused more worldwide problems than we can count. Let's not add to those problems in our recovery. Get wealthy if you want, but please avoid the pursuit of excess power, at work and at home. That's generally best for all of us.

Warranty Two / Sufficient Funds and Prudent Reserve: Before setting our sights on wealth and prestige, let's first get our real needs met. Let's pay our debts and create a financial cushion that will allow us to live full and comfortable lives, take risks, pursue our passions and ambitions, and be generous to those around us. If we have handled this phase of our development well, our Higher Power *may* allow us to grow into wealth. But first, HP wants to see how we behave with having *enough* money, before we'll be given the chance to have *too much* money.

Warranty Three / No Authority Over Other Members: Just as we need, and sometimes demand, the opportunity to think for ourselves, to find and have our own opinions, and to pray unfiltered to our Higher Power, we ought to recognize and support this need in others. In earlier discussions of the Concepts, we've talked of matching authority to responsibility, of avoiding micromanagement, and of choosing the right people to whom we'll delegate. We believe these actions and decisions to be equally important at work and home.

Warranty Four / Decisions, Discussions, and Voting by Substantial Unanimity: We've suggested above that too much power is rarely the addict's, or compulsive debtor's, friend. We've noticed, too, that many recovering debtors and business owners work especially well in partnership with others, often with our spouses. Power shared effectively equals power problems minimized. The most important part of how we share power in DA and BDA is ensuring the voices, preferences, values, priorities, objections, and concerns of at least two-thirds of the decision-making participants are addressed and satisfied, every time. More understanding by even more members is always preferable. This can be true at home and work too, even if we're dealing only with the voices of the people around us, although they usually don't have an actual vote.

Warranty Five / Being Non-Punitive: We talk here of “punitive,” meaning punishment. Unless we’re talking about the unrepentant, defiant, recalcitrant, and insubordinate — and even then — how about if we seek to take “corrective action”? Rather than a knee-jerk reaction to cause pain in equal amounts to pain we feel has been inflicted upon us, why don’t we slow down, do our own Step work, ask for guidance on our part, and make amends when necessary? When approached in the framework of recovery, at home and work, most problems can be resolved by clear communication and action plans, in full view and under the guidance of our Higher Power.

Warranty Six / Avoiding Public Controversy: In the AA service literature, it’s made clear that recovering alcoholics fought their way into the program and fellowship they have today. But their negative interactions were limited just like ours: First, their disagreements stayed within the fellowship; it never became public information. Second, the resulting tensions were not allowed to undermine anyone’s recovery. That doesn’t mean no one relapsed over not getting their way; that absolutely happened. But no one was shunted to the side or shown the door because their opinions were divergent with others. In our businesses, this would suggest development of a culture of clear communication and avoidance of gossip. If people feel free to speak up privately, they usually feel no need to make their concerns and grievances public knowledge.

Warranty Seven / Avoiding Acts of Government: Each member of DA and BDA is permitted and encouraged to practice the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in the way they see fit, ideally with the guidance and feedback of a sponsor or sponsors, and other members with whom they’re doing service. Once elected, we allow our trusted servants to serve for the allotted term without interruption or interference by our group, Intergroup, WSC, or GSB. To do otherwise is to allow for scapegoating, shaming, and humiliation via character assassination. Even if we don’t like someone or their actions, we have no right to govern, punish, or condemn them. We leave that kind of discipline to Higher Power. In our businesses, on the other hand, we will be called on to judge and discipline others. But we can focus on leading rather than ruling. Leading managers and employees to do what must be done, based on organizational needs, rather than on the personal needs and preferences of the business owner, is much more effective for everyone.

Warranty Eight / Remaining Democratic: What is a democracy? It’s “a system of government by an entire population or by all the members eligible to vote, typically through elected representatives.” Democracy places control of an organization or group in the hands of the majority of its members. It is also the practice or principles of social equality. With these definitions in mind, we recognize that we are being encouraged to allow the best possible decisions for DA and BDA to be made by at least a two-third majority, and then to support those decisions even if we don’t agree with them. As mentioned before, we can do the same in our businesses, even if we don’t distribute voting rights to our managers or employees. This goes back to BDA Tool Twelve, when we suggested listening a LOT: to employees, customers, vendors, and any other relevant stakeholders.